

**Utah's 2006 State Service Plan  
Utah Commission on Volunteers  
September 18, 2006**

**Introduction**

The Utah Commission on Volunteers, an office of the Lieutenant Governor, is comprised of a 25-member board that meets quarterly to set goals for fulfilling its mission to “improve communities through service and volunteering in Utah”. Members of the Commission on Volunteers represent all streams of national service, community and faith-based organizations, nonprofits, government, labor unions, youth service, higher education, service organizations, and the business community.

Since the inception of the Unified State Plan in 1997, and at the 2002 benchmark year when the Plan was updated, the Utah Commission on Volunteers has taken seriously its role to convene its state partners to establish a unified plan for service in Utah. In the three years from 2001-2004, Utah's Unified State Plan partners met eight to ten times per year to coordinate service activities and cooperate on conferences and trainings. The Unified State Plan has served as a guiding document for three Executive Directors of the Utah Commission on Volunteers (UCOV), as well as for its staff and board members.

The 2006 State Service Plan for the state of Utah is the result of a review of the 2002 Unified State Plan by representatives of the Corporation for National and Community Service Utah State Office, the Utah State Office of Education, Utah's YES Ambassador from the Points of Light Foundation, and the Executive Director and staff of the UCOV.

Other key service partners in Utah have been consulted in the establishment of this 2006 State Service Plan including Lieutenant Governor Gary R. Herbert who chairs the UCOV. Representatives of Utah Campus Compact, the State Board of Regents, United Way, Utah Nonprofits Association, youth service and Senior Corps programs, the Native American community, the Utah Department of Public Safety, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have contributed significantly to the scope of this 2006 State Service Plan. Additionally, at the 2006 Utah Conference on Service, a public forum on the state of service in Utah was conducted and the results included in the consideration of new goals and strategies for the upcoming three years.

**Background**

The original Utah Unified State Plan, established in March 1997, envisioned "a state where local volunteer service is a valued and expected responsibility, and where service by citizens improves the quality of life in the community". Plan partners chose to encourage service that addressed community coordination and collaboration; needs of children and youth; transportation; families; housing; and needs of low-income Utahns.

Between 1997 and 2005, twenty volunteer centers were established in various geographic areas to be accessible to more communities in the state. Since 2003, volunteer efforts have focused on meeting community needs with specific emphasis on emergency preparedness and homeland security. In an effort to promote emergency preparedness for individuals, communities, schools and businesses throughout the state, the Utah Commission on Volunteers and Lt. Governor Gary Herbert launched the “Be Ready Utah” campaign with key partners at the Utah Department of Public Safety and the Utah State Office of Education. Other partners such as the Utah Federation of Youth and the Youth Engaged in Service Ambassador provided emergency materials and resources to districts and schools throughout the state in observance of National Youth Service Day.

In June of 2006, the Corporation for National and Community Service released its landmark report, “Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings” which ranked Utah number one in the nation for volunteering across nearly every sector. While this survey well reflects the culture of service of Utah’s citizens, recent statewide studies have marked a slight downturn in actual volunteerism in Utah. Furthermore, the challenge of sustaining local volunteer centers provides a challenge to the Utah Commission on Volunteers and its State Service Plan partners to increase the effectiveness of national service and volunteering across the state.

With the establishment of the Utah Citizen Corps program in 2003, under the direction of the Utah Commission on Volunteers, volunteerism added a focus of community preparedness through affiliation with well-known programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Community Emergency Response Teams, Volunteers in Police Service, Medical Reserve Corps, and Fire Corps. These programs offer training as well as affiliation and serve as the pillar programs of Citizen Corps. These programs have added a new dimension to the UCOV portfolio and new opportunities to engage volunteers to improve their communities.

## **Goals**

The primary goal of the 2006 State Service Plan is to **elevate volunteerism** in the state of Utah, a complement to the Governor’s new marketing campaign for economic development in Utah called “Life Elevated”. At the National Conference on Service in Seattle, June of 2006, the Corporation announced its goal of increasing volunteers by 10 million people by the year 2010. This goal translates to an increase of approximately 15% in the number of volunteers, or an annual increase of nearly 5%. Utah Commission on Volunteers board members decided at a recent board meeting that while increasing the number of volunteers is important, increasing the effectiveness of volunteers is even more critical. Therefore, the Utah Commission on Volunteers and its State Service Plan partners will strive to increase the effectiveness of volunteering in Utah by focusing on the following goals:

- Increase the number of volunteer centers in the state by providing training, technical assistance, and opportunities for funding to volunteer centers;
- Increase the number of cross-stream trainings of AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps programs;

- Increase the number of Citizen Corps Councils in the state of Utah by 25% in 2006-2007; and
- Increase the number of volunteers in the state of Utah by 3% annually.

The 2006 State Service Plan partners will meet quarterly beginning in January of 2007. Partners will incorporate the Corporation's four strategic initiatives to reach Utah's goals for coordinating service:

- Mobilizing more volunteers;
- Serving at risk youth and connecting them with service opportunities;
- Engaging students in communities; and
- Using baby boomers' experience.

The 2006 State Service Plan partners will focus the following resources on the four strategic initiatives:

- Mobilizing more volunteers by increasing the number of local Citizen Corps Councils and increasing the number of volunteers assisting AmeriCorps programs;
- Strengthening the partnership with the First Lady's "Power in Youth" initiative to serve at risk youth and connect them with service opportunities;
- Engage students in communities by strengthening the partnership with Utah Campus Compact to provide a youth summit for 250-300 youth leaders; and
- Establish a partnership with the Governor's Commission on Aging and existing partners in the Senior Service Corps to maximize the experience of baby boomers in Utah.

### **Specific Programmatic Areas in the State of Utah**

Utah's focus in the next three years is on three specific program areas: disaster preparedness, increasing literacy, and improving the capacity of volunteer centers. A brief summary of efforts currently being led by the Utah Commission on Volunteers:

- Disaster preparedness in Utah is being spearheaded through the state Citizen Corps Council as well as local, regional, and county Citizen Corps Councils. The five pillar programs of Citizen Corps provide opportunities for service and training so that volunteers are more effective and helpful to public safety professionals in the event of a disaster.
- Increasing literacy in Utah has been a long-term goal of the Utah Commission on Volunteers, spearheaded previously by programs such as Utah's Promise and various AmeriCorps programs. Currently, the Northern Utah Curriculum Consortium hosts 49 AmeriCorps members in 40+ schools with the capacity to mobilize hundreds of volunteers in their respective communities each year.
- Improving the capacity of volunteer centers through state and local funding is a goal of the Utah Commission on Volunteers and the Utah Volunteer Centers Association. Trainings delivered by the UCOV will include Volunteer Reception Center Training and other technical

assistance. UCOV and the UVCA will encourage volunteer centers to achieve the standards of excellence of the Points of Light Foundation.

### **Ongoing Efforts and Special Initiatives**

Utah's Citizen Corps program, established in March of 2003, took a major step up in the area of marketing with the launch of the "Be Ready Utah" campaign in April of 2006. Utah's AmeriCorps programs also increased dramatically with an increase in the UCOV portfolio in both formula and competitively funded programs.

- Disaster preparedness in Utah is being promoted through a statewide campaign called "Be Ready Utah" which encourages individuals, families, communities, schools, and businesses to prepare for disasters of all kinds. The Utah Citizen Corps Council, a program of the Utah Commission on Volunteers, is the sponsor of "Be Ready Utah" with partners at the Utah Department of Public Safety, Utah State Office of Education, and Utah Department of Health, as well as numerous business partners. The scope of "Be Ready Utah" is so enormous that only a concerted effort by all national service partners and local community-based organizations will guarantee its success.
- The addition of an AmeriCorps Homeland Security VISTA project to the UCOV portfolio called "Utah Citizen Corps VISTA Program" will place 20 VISTA's throughout the state to increase the capacity of local emergency management programs, volunteer centers, and Citizen Corps Councils.

### **Non-Monetary Support and Training Provided by the Corporation**

The 2006 State Service Plan for Utah includes an increase in training provided to local volunteer centers, AmeriCorps programs and Citizen Corps Councils. The Corporation can assist in the following ways:

- Providing celebrity or notable speakers for major training events such as the annual Conference on Service;
- Trainers specific to disaster preparedness topics for the annual Conference and other regional trainings; and
- Sustainability and fundraising training for volunteer centers.

### **Conclusion**

The Utah Commission on Volunteers is proud of Utah's ranking number one in the nation for volunteering and salutes all of the organizations that engage volunteers for this newsworthy accomplishment. The 2006 State Service Plan organizes the efforts of all its partners for better coordination and collaboration. Together, we can increase not only the numbers of volunteers engaged in service in Utah but also their effectiveness. With preparedness comes peace of mind and a readiness to serve others.